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STATE FOR AF/S GABRIELLE MALLORY
STATE FOR INR/AA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV KDEM MI
SUBJ: FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER TO SERVE 5 YEARS

REF: LILONGWE 118

¶1. (U) Former Minister of Education Yussuf Mwawa, who was convicted on four counts of corruption last week, will spend 5 years in hard labor. The judge in the case announced that he wanted to make an example of Mwawa, who used government money to pay for his wedding.

¶2. (SBU) As reported in reftel, Mwawa had been convicted of abuse of public office, simple theft, forgery and authoring a false document on February 9. After a short delay due to Mwawa's hospitalization (for alleged high blood pressure and diabetes), Mwawa was sentenced to just over 12 years in hard labor for the four crimes. However, as he will be serving the sentences concurrently, he will spend a total of 5 years in prison. Though Mwawa has said he will appeal the ruling, his prison sentence will begin immediately.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: The fact that Mwawa will spend a good amount of time behind bars is an encouraging sign for Malawi's anti-corruption drive. The ACB must also be hoping that the severity of the sentence (considering that the value of Mwawa's fraud was a mere \$1500) will serve as a precedent when they go after bigger fish, such as former President Bakili Muluzi.

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